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Sen. Kevin Witkos

Testimony

Planning & Development Committee

February 4, 2015

In Support of: House Bill No. 5096: An Act Increasing the Threshold Required for Passage of Unfunded Mandates

Senator Osten, Representative Miller, Senator Linares, Representative Aman and members of the Planning & Development Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 5096: An Act Increasing the Threshold Required for Passage of Unfunded Mandates.

Here in Connecticut, we have over 1,200 mandates on cities and towns, a vast majority of which are unfunded. These unfunded mandates can create huge problems for our towns when they cannot afford the added associated costs.

Every time new costs are imposed by state agencies, towns are tasked with finding new revenue to fund the new requirements. More red tape often translates to higher local taxes, something both town officials and residents hate to see.

House Bill No. 5096 will help reduce the amount of unfunded mandates passed on to towns by making it more difficult for such mandates to pass in the legislature. Requiring that two-thirds of the legislature vote in favor of an unfunded mandate before it is allowed to pass helps ensure that mandates with significant opposition are not imposed on our towns and taxpayers.

Connecticut, like all states, must strive to reach an important balance between expanding regulations for the good of the community and overburdening towns that are already facing tough economic times and limited budgets.

Together, we need to make our communities more affordable to fit the needs of families and stimulate local economies. I strongly believe that reducing burdens and regulations on municipalities is an important step in improving daily life for people everywhere in Connecticut.

Thank you for raising this bill and for the opportunity to testify today.